

METHOD FOR ENCOURAGING LOWERING OF A TOILET SEAT LID

Inventor

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Assignee

None

Entity

Small

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CROSS-REFERENCE TO OTHER APPLICATIONS

None.

FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

None.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] Toilet seat lids are generally made of a rigid material comprising some sort of hinged design that raises from or lowers to a toilet seat. The lids have aesthetic as well as functional purposes, especially safety purposes when small children are around. However, they are many times left in the open or raised position through carelessness, thoughtlessness or inadvertence.

[0002] The position of the toilet seat following the use of the toilet has been a source of contention between men and women since the invention of the hinged toilet seat. Many men have a tendency to leave the seat up after use, while women prefer that the seat be left in the down position. By definition, if the lid is down, then the seat is down.

[0003] Although leaving the toilet seat and lid in the upright position following use is thought to be a rather benign social problem, the situation can lead to severe personal trauma for subsequent users who fail to notice the upright position of the seat. It can also result in serious safety problems if there are toddlers in the house, and some rather distasteful habits among household pets.

[0004] People have tried to address this problem through various inventions that attempt to close the lid automatically following use. The technologies involve alarms, batteries, mercury switches, timers, foot peddles, motors, valves, springs and/or pressure sensors. Although these technologies may work as designed, they are used rarely, if at all, as they may be expensive, prone to failure, unsightly and/or deemed to be overkill.

[0005] See U.S. Patent Nos. 3,484,876; 5,829,073; 5,636,389 and 5,754,984.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] One aspect of the present invention is the recognition that it would be desirable to provide the user with an incentive to put the lid down after using the toilet. The present

invention creates such an incentive by creating a toilet seat lid using an actual map of specific interest to the user such that the user will wish to keep the lid closed as much as possible so that the design on the lid will be visible. This invention is designed to influence behavior of users to lower the lid following use of the toilet, thereby reducing the number of contentious situations. The current invention addresses the problem of leaving the toilet seat up by changing human behavior. People will want to put the toilet seat and lid down following use of the toilet to see and display the actual map, typically personalized, on the top of the lid. There are no added mechanics to quit working, no replacement of batteries, no continuing expenses, and far from being unsightly, a toilet seat lid made according to the invention is a piece of art that displays an interest of the user. It is anticipated that the toilet seat when in the lowered or closed position will also stimulate discussions among household guests, thereby channeling discussions to an area of interest of the user.

[0007] Another aspect of the invention is directed to a method for encouraging lowering of a toilet seat lid onto a toilet seat when a toilet is not in use. An area of interest for a potential user is determined. An actual map is selected according to the area of interest. The map is secured to an upper surface of a toilet seat lid so that the map is visible when the toilet seat lid is lowered onto the toilet seat. The area of interest may be an activity of interest and/or a geographical area of interest of interest for a potential user. The map may also be personalized for a potential user.

[0008] A further aspect of the invention is directed to a toilet seat lid having a lid body, with an upper surface, and an actual map secured to the upper surface. The map is visible when the toilet seat lid is lowered onto the toilet seat. The map is preferably laminated to the upper surface and may include one or more personalizations. The map may comprise at least one of the following: an aircraft navigation map, a nautical chart, a ski lift/run map, a road map, a trail map and a topographic map.

[0009] Various features and advantages of the invention will appear from the following description in which the preferred embodiments have been set forth in detail in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

[0010] Fig. 1 is a plan view of toilet seat assembly including a toilet seat lid made according to the invention;

[0011] Fig. 2 is a simplified cross-sectional view taken along line 2-2 of Fig. 1; and

[0012] Fig. 3 illustrates samples of personalized indicia that may be applied to the map of Fig. 1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0013] Fig. 1, 2 and 3 illustrate a toilet seat assembly 10 comprising a toilet seat 12 and a toilet seat lid 14 connected by a hinge 16. Toilet seat lid 14 has an upper surface 18 to which an actual map 20 is securely mounted. Map 20 is preferably covered by and protected by a protective layer 22. This results in map 20 being laminated to upper surface 18 of toilet seat lid 14.

[0014] In producing toilet seat assembly 10, an area of interest for a potential user is determined. The potential user may be a known individual or an unknown individual, such as the current president of a ski club or other organization, or one or more of a group of individuals having a common area of interest, such as persons living in or visiting the same geographical area, using the same airport, frequenting the same ski area or national forest or having a common interest (such as aviation, mountain lion habitat or fishing for largemouth bass). Thus, the area of interest may include a geographical area of interest, such as the San Francisco Bay area, Lake Tahoe resort areas, New Jersey, Caribbean islands, etc., or an activity of interest, such as skiing, boating, hiking, flying, etc. The area of interest may also be an activity of interest within a geographical area of interest, such as flying from the San Francisco Bay Area exemplified by the aircraft navigation map of Fig. 1.

[0015] The present invention involves the use of an actual map 20. An actual map includes maps and charts, including, for example, aircraft navigation maps, nautical charts, ski lift/run maps from commercial ski areas, road maps, trail maps and topographic maps, that are designed for use as a map or chart and are easily recognized as actual maps or charts not simply as decoration, ornamentation or otherwise. It is believed that the use of an actual map creates a much higher level of interest than would be created by ornamentation having nothing to do with maps or than would be created by designs that are not actual maps.

[0016] One method for applying map 20 to lid 14 is as follows. A portion of an actual map (such as the aircraft navigation map illustrated in Fig. 1) would be cut to the shape of the toilet seat lid, and an adhesive (such as Elmer's Glue) would be applied to the top of lid 14. A plastic spreader would be used to eliminate all air bubbles under map 20, the excess adhesive would be wiped off, typically with a wet sponge, and lid 14 would be set aside to dry. Personalizations 24

could then be attached to the map, in the form of words or symbols or other indicia that had previously been printed onto clear (such as Avery 8663) or white (such as Avery 5162) labels. Examples of such personalizations 24 are illustrated in Fig. 3. Personalizations may also be provided by lettering, drawing or otherwise marking directly on map 20. Personalizations may also be applied to map 20 prior to securing map 20 to lid 14. After personalizations 24 (such as "Seaplanes Only" and "You Are Here") are applied to map 20, the personalized map is treated with a coating of a protectant (such as Krylon® Crystal Clear Acrylic Spray Coating). Lid 14 may be used immediately after such coating, but if more protection is desired, two additional coats of polyurethane can be applied, allowing for full drying between applications.

[0017] Another, and presently less preferred, method would involve the use of Mod Podge®, a glue, sealer and finish available in craft stores, from Plaid Enterprises, Inc. of Norcross, Georgia. Mod Podge® is layered onto the toilet seat lid and a map is applied, air bubbles forced out with a sponge applicator, and allowed to dry. Personalizations are applied to the map; the map is then sprayed with a protectant (such as Krylon® Crystal Clear Acrylic Spray Coating) and an additional layer of Mod Podge® is applied to the surface of the map and allowed to fully dry. It dries clear. The surface is then sanded with fine (400 grit) sandpaper, and another layer of Mod Podge® is applied and allowed to dry. This process should be repeated such that the lid has at least four layers, with sanding in between each layer. The resulting lid is thereby coated with a waterproof, hardened, clear "laminated" surface.

[0018] Other methods for laminating, or otherwise securing, map 20 to lid 14 may also be employed.

[0019] Other modification and variation can be made to the disclosed embodiments without departing from the subject of the invention as defined in following claims. For example, more than one map 20 may be mounted to a single lid 14. Also, personalizations 24 may be applied by the user after purchasing toilet seat assembly 10; toilet seat assembly 10 could be sold together with a package of preprinted and blank labels, a spray can of clear acrylic and instructions on how to personalize map 20.

[0020] Any and all patents, patent applications and printed publications referred to above are incorporated by reference.